has fallen down recently. As the international prices are low at present, there would be larger availability for the domestic market and domestic prices are expected to come down.

(e) Government has also chalked out massive programmes like area expansion of cashew and improvement of old senile plantation with high yielding varieties of cashew for increasing production and productivity of cashew in the country alongwith concerned state development departments for implementation of the same. The above programmes are being implemented under National Horticulture Mission in various States from 2005-06 onwards and under Technology Mission in North Eastern States. By implementing the above programmes, it is expected that cashewnut production may reach to 11.00 lakh MT by the end of the 11th Plan, which would increase domestic availability of Cashew and also contain the price rise.

Assistance to tea gardens in Assam and West Bengal

1722. SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has taken-up steps as well as sanctioned any financial package towards the tea gardens in Assam and West Bengal which were closed down since, 2003;

(b) if so, the details thereof, including the allocation made, amount released and tea garden-wise utilization made in Assam and West Bengal; and

(c) the year-wise details of tea gardens in Assam and West Bengal regarding Provident Fund accrued and their status of manufacturing unit within the garden for the last three years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) A rehabilitation package was announced on 29.6.2007, providing for financial relief to the extent of Rs. 38.65 crores to 33 closed tea gardens (17 in Kerala, 14 in West Bengal, 2 in Assam), which were closed as on 1.4.2007. The allocation to the closed tea gardens is need based and depends upon the health of the garden, existing condition and response of the new promoter, if any. The provision for necessary funds to individual gardens in a particular state is made based on eligibility criterion laid down in the Rehabilitation package.

(c) The details of Provident Fund Arrears in respect of Tea Gardens falling under the territorial jurisdiction of West Bengal are as follows:—

Rs. in Lakhs

2005-06	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09
2408.52	3108.48	3334.68	4115.16

The tea plantation workers of Assam are covered by the Assam Tea Plantations Provident Fund Act and the EPF and MP Act, 1952 is not applicable to the tea plantations in the State of Assam.